

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

1. (Twice Amended) A telephone answering device, comprising:
a telephone line interface;
a controller;
voice message memory adapted to store a plurality of voice messages; and

a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling said telephone answering device to leave a voice message to separately secure in a single mailbox [a] said voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back said voice message.

11. (Twice Amended) A method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

prompting a party calling said telephone answering device to leave a voice message to enter an authorized security code;

comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code accessible by said telephone answering device;
and

upon matching said entered authorized security code with said at least one pre-stored authorized security code, securing in a single mailbox a recorded voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back said voice message.

16. (Three Times Amended) A method for accessing a secured voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

prompting a user of said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code on a voice message-by-voice message basis for voice messages secured by a calling party;

comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code associated with said voice messages by a calling party while leaving a message [accessible by said telephone answering device]; and

upon matching said entered authorized security code with said at least one pre-stored authorized security code, allowing said user access to an underlying voice message secured in a single mailbox of said telephone answering device.

18. (Twice Amended) Apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

means for prompting a party calling said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code;

means for comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code associated with said voice messages by a calling party while leaving a message [accessible by said telephone answering device]; and

means for securing in a single mailbox a recorded voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back said voice message, upon matching said entered authorized security code with said at least one pre-stored authorized security code.

23. (Three Times Amended) Apparatus for accessing a secured voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

means for prompting a user of said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code on a voice message-by-voice message basis for voice messages secured by a calling party;

means for comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code associated with said voice messages by a calling party while leaving a message [accessible by said telephone answering device]; and

means for allowing said user access to an underlying voice message secured in a single mailbox, upon matching said entered authorized security code with said at least one pre-stored authorized security code.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 11, 16, 18 and 23 are amended herein. Claims 1-24 remain pending in the application.

The Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider earlier rejections in light of the following remarks. No new issues are raised nor is further search required as a result of the changes made herein. Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 and 9-24 over Nabkel

In the Office Action, claims 1-7 and 9-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Nabkel, U.S. Patent No. 5,963,626 ("Nabkel"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1-7, 9 and 10 recite, *inter alia*, a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to separately secure in a single mailbox the voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message. Claims 11-15 recite, *inter alia*, prompting a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to enter an authorized security code.

Nabkel appears to disclose a method and system for generating and posting a message to callers based on a caller's identity (Abstract). Upon gaining access to a service provider, the subscriber is prompted for a PIN (Nabkel, col. 2, lines 28-30). After entering a valid PIN, the subscriber is prompted to check receipt of communiqué (Nabkel, col. 2, lines 33-37). If desired, the subscriber may enter a corresponding PIN number associated with a calling party for very private communiqués (Nabkel, col. 2, lines 58-65). A calling party retrieving a personal communiqué is prompted to enter a PIN (Nabkel, col. 4, lines 41-47). The subscriber may also have the option of specifying security parameters for a communicate and assign a message PIN associated with a message or PIN associated with a specific individual (Nabkel, col. 3, lines 53-58).

Nabkel discloses allowing a subscriber to retrieve private communiqués by entering a PIN. A subscriber accesses a service provider to specify a security parameter for a communiqué and assign a PIN associated with

a message. A subscriber performing administrative tasks specifying a security parameter for a communiqué is NOT a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to secure a voice message and enter an authorized security code, as recited by claims 1-7 and 9-15.

Claims 16-24 recite, *inter alia*, comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code associated with voice messages by a calling party while leaving a message.

As discussed above, Nabkel discloses allowing a subscriber to retrieve private communiqués by entering a PIN. A subscriber accesses a service provider to specify a security parameter for a communiqué and assign a PIN associated with a message. A subscriber performing administrative tasks specifying a security parameter for a communiqué is NOT comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code associated with voice messages by a calling party while leaving a message, as recited by claims 16-24.

A benefit of allowing a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to secure the voice message is, e.g., giving the caller control over which messages are private. A caller calling a telephone answering device may in some instances want to leave an un-secured voice message that anyone could review. In other instances, a caller may want to secure a voice message for review only by a predetermined person with a message access PIN. The cited prior art fails to disclose or suggest allowing a party calling to leave a message to secure the message.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-7 and 9-24 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 8 over Nabkel in view of Oberlander

In the Office Action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Nabkel in view of Oberlander et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,825,865 (“Oberlander”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 8 is dependent on claim 1, and is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 8 recites, *inter alia*, a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to separately secure in a single mailbox the voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message.

As discussed above, Nabkel fails to disclose a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to separately secure in a single mailbox the voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message, as recited by claim 8.

The Office Action relies on Oberlander to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Nabkel to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

Oberlander appears to disclose a profile that is maintained either in a central profile database or in a more distributed manner that includes local profile databases (Abstract). The profile database include preference information that is used to direct messages from sources to destinations (Oberlander, Abstract). A header attached to a message includes a target address such as a telephone number, a source address, a target logical ID such as a personal ID, a source logical ID, a data type indicator, a format indicator, a services pointer, a priority indicator, etc. (Oberlander, col. 4, line 43-col. 5, line 11).

Oberlander discloses a header to direct various messages from various sources to various destinations. Oberlander fails to disclose securing messages, much less a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to separately secure in a single mailbox the voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message, as recited by claim 8.

Moreover, Oberlander discloses a header to direct various messages from various sources to various destinations. Combining Oberlander's header that directs various messages to destinations with Nabkel's voice messaging system would be nonsensical. Nabkel's system contains a single

destination, i.e., the messaging system. A single destination would not require a header that directs a message to various destinations.

Nabkel and Oberlander, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach or suggest a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to separately secure in a single mailbox the voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message, as recited by claim 8.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 8 is patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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